asemic movement 3

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asemic movement #1 & #2 can be freely downloaded:
http://vugg.wippiespace.com/vugg/gaze/asemicmovement1.pdf
http://vugg.wippiespace.com/vugg/gaze/asemicmovement2.pdf

please enjoy the inconsistent & non-academic styles of this journal. it's possible to communicate serious ideas in a fun, creative way. you don't have to obey the Style Manual.

book review: SHADOWGRAPHS AND LEGENDS
by R. Murray Schafer
Arcana Editions (R.R. No. 2, Indian River, Ontario, K0L 2B0, Canada), 2004
reviewed by Tim Gaze

This is the most recent book by R. Murray to contain handwritten, calligraphic words, symbols, squiggles & pictures. Some of his pen-work can be described as asemic writing.

SHADOWGRAPHS AND LEGENDS is full of playful, mostly single page games and meditations. After the book's title page, the first page says:
To begin: a pile of unblemished paper
The pens are arranged to the side

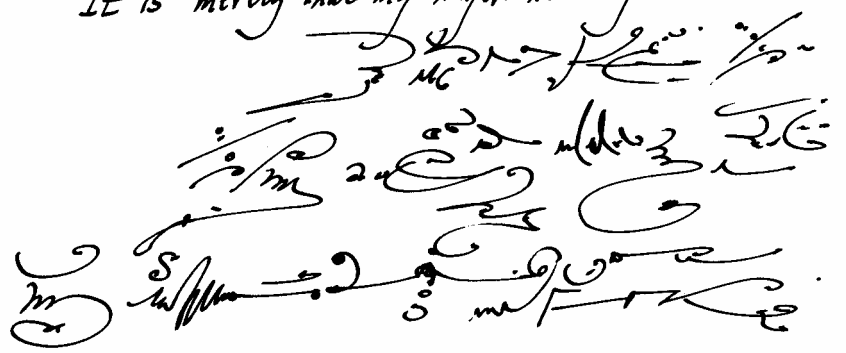
The rest of the page contains a continuation of this thought, illustrated by pictures of more pens, a hand holding a pen, a reading lamp, the corner of a window-frame, and some branching synaptic nerves.

The same tone, of exploration and fun, is repeated throughout.

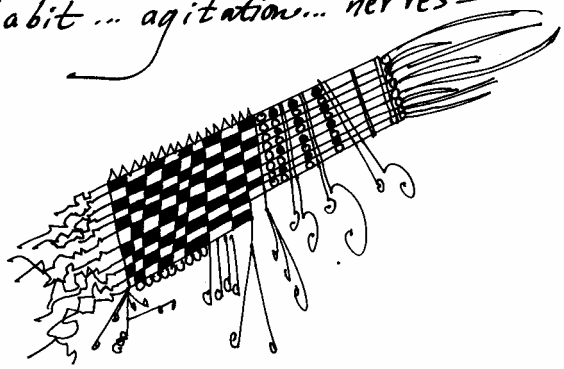
I first knew Schafer as the author of a book about the sonic environment we inhabit: **The Soundscape: the tuning of the world** (several editions). Then, to my pleasure, I discovered from Rasula & McCaffery's **Imagining Language** (MIT Press, 2001) that R. Murray has also written a number of books which touch upon asemic writing:
Dicamus et Labyrinthos (Arcana, 1984)
Ariadne (Arcana, 1985)
The Chaldean Inscription (Arcana, 1978)

Here are a few sample pages from SHADOWGRAPHS:

I am not compelled to write
It is merely that my fingers have begun to twitch



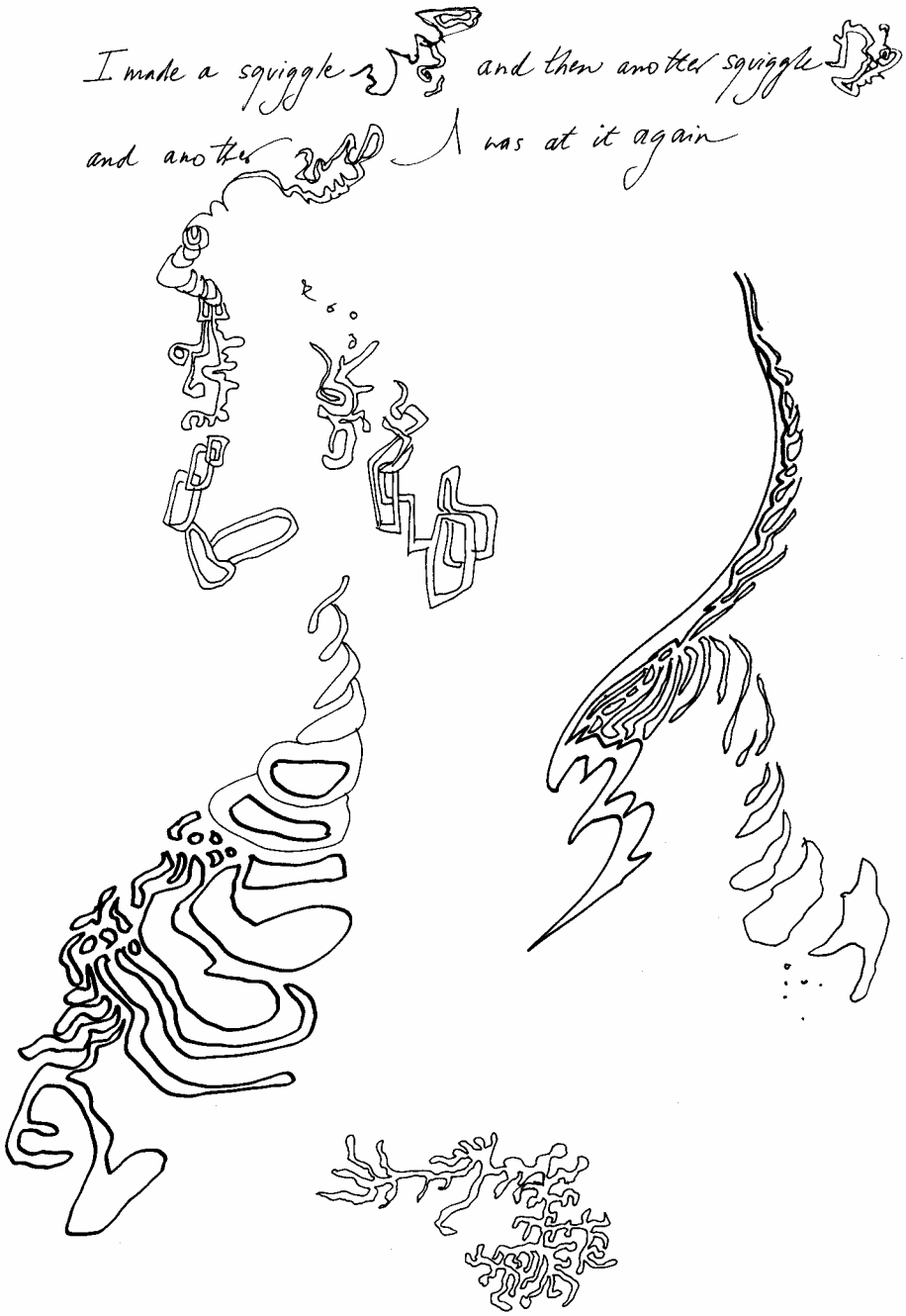
Call it habit ... agitation ... nerves

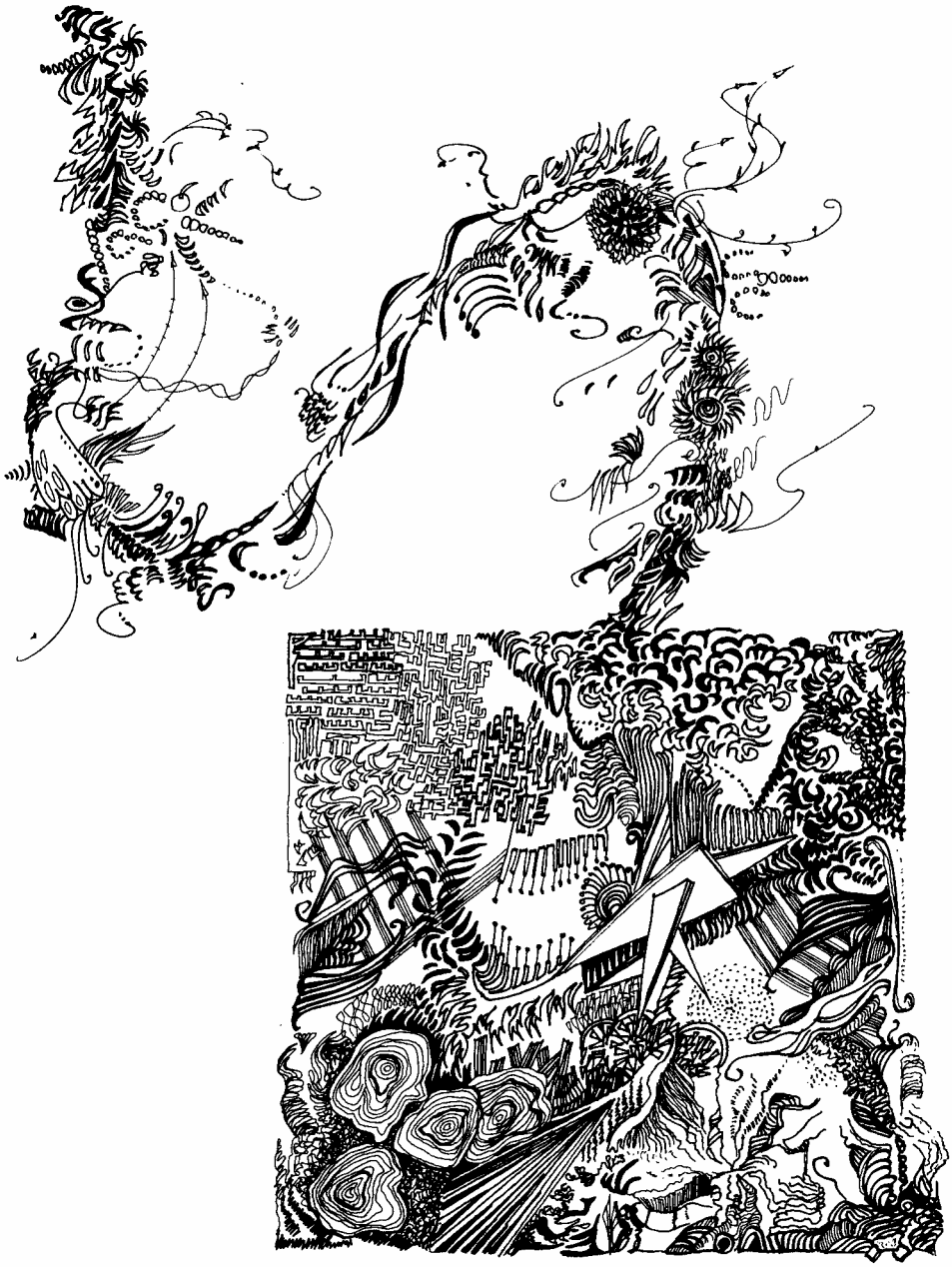


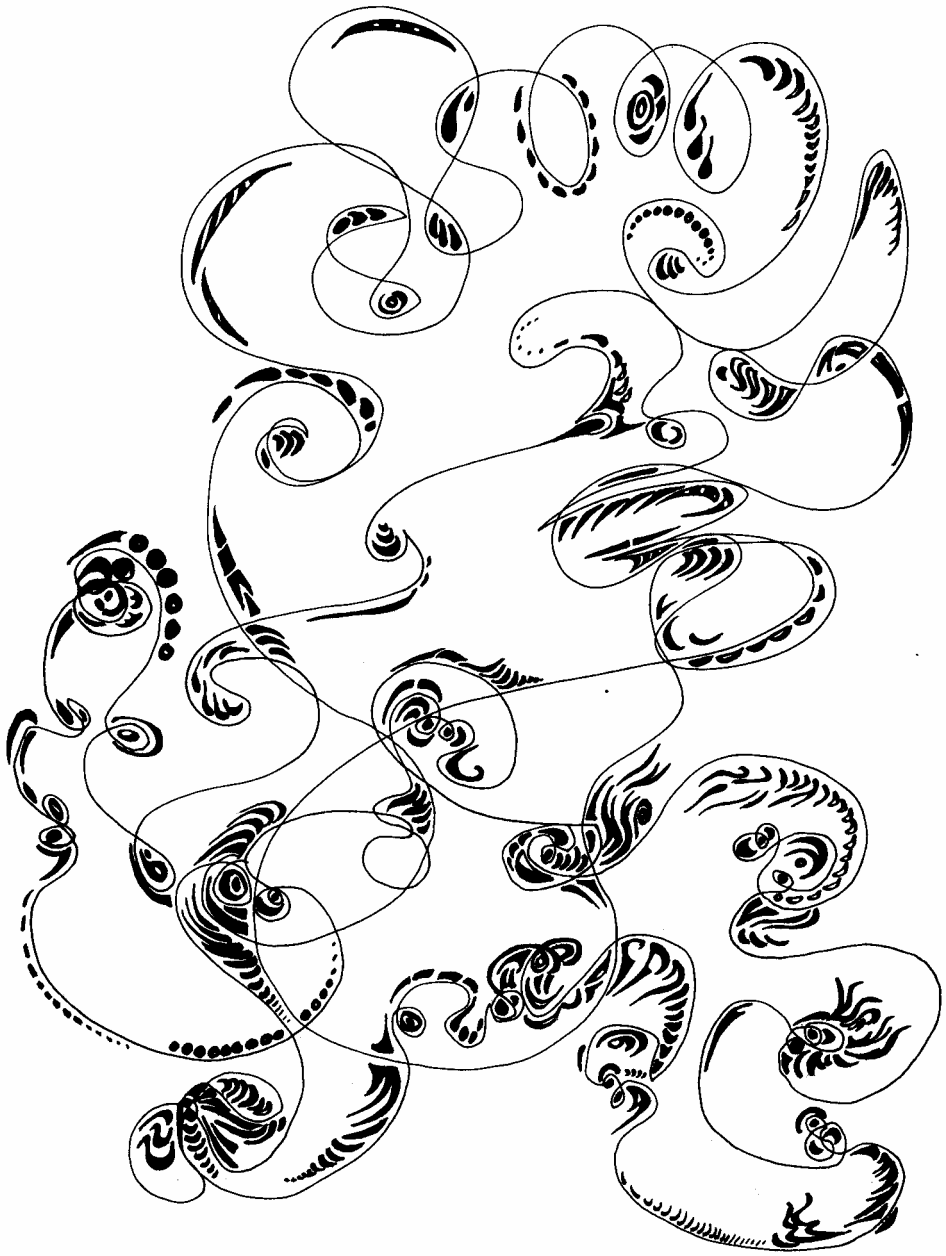
All I know is that the paper
invites the pen and that
when ink flows from the
nostril of the pen,
patterns of words result

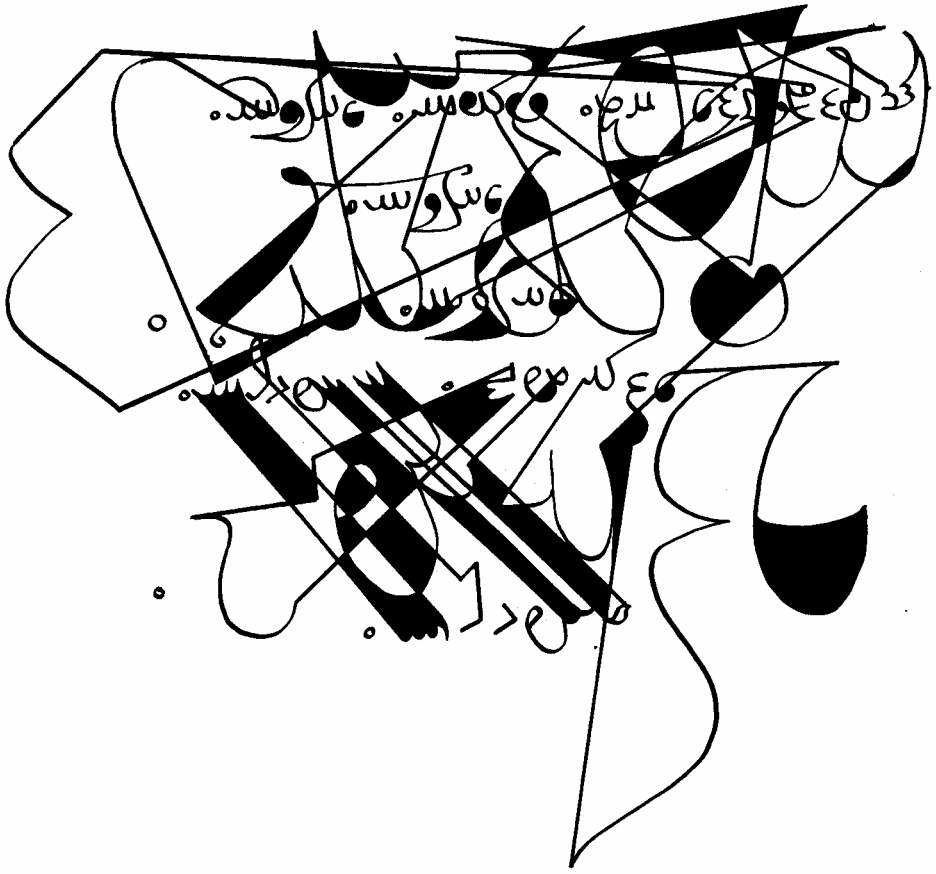
I made a squiggle and then another squiggle

and another I was at it again









ZOROASTRIAN MESSAGE

new translation of a Russian Futurist manifesto, by Tatiana Bonch-Osmolovskaya:

А. Крученых и В. Хлебников	**A. Kruchenykh and V. Hlebnikov**
БУКВА КАК ТАКОВАЯ	**A LETTER AS SUCH**
О слове, как таковом, уже не спорят, согласны даже. Но чего стоит их согласие? Надо только напомнить, что говорящие задним умом о слове ничего не говорят о букве! Слепорожденные! Слово все еще не ценность, слово все еще только терпимо. Иначе почему же его не облекают в серый арестантский халат? Вы видели буквы их слов — вытянуты в ряд, обиженные, подстриженные, и все одинаково бесцветны и серы — не буквы, а клейма! А ведь спросите любого из речарей, и он скажет, что слово, написанное одним почерком или набранное одной свинцовой, совсем не похоже на то же слово в другом начертании. Ведь не оденете же вы всех ваших красавиц в одинаковые казенные армяки! Еще бы! Они бы плюнули вам в глаза, но слово — оно молчит. Ибо оно мертво (как Борис и Глеб), оно у вас мертворожденное. А, Святополки окаянные!	About a word, as such, they do not argue, they even agree. But what does their agreement cost? We must remind you that those hindsighters talking about a word tell us nothing about a letter! Born blind! The word is still not valuable, the word is only just bearable. Otherwise why is it clothed in a grey prison cloak? You've seen the letters of their words – stretched out in a row, resentful, with shaven heads, and all equally colourless and grey – not letters, but stigmas! But ask any speaker, and he'd say that a word written in one handwriting or typed with one print, is not like the same word in another type at all. You would not dress all of your beauties in the same state-owned armiaks! Of course! They would spit into your eyes, but a word – it is silent. For it is dead (as st. Boris and Gleb), it is dead-born. Oh, Svyatopolks the Accursed!
Е с т ь д в а п о л о ж е н и я : 1) Что настроение изменяет почерк во время написания. 2) Что почерк, своеобразно измененный настроением, передает это настроение читателю, независимо от слов. Так же должно поставить вопрос о письменных, зримых или просто осязаемых, точно рукою слепца, знаках. Понятно, необязательно, чтобы речарь был бы и писцом книги саморунной, пожалуй, лучше если бы сей поручил это художнику. Но таких книг еще не было. Впервые даны они будетлянами, именно: «Старинная любовь» переписывалась для печати М. Ларионовым. «Взорваль» Н. Кульбиным и др., «Утиное гнездышко» О. Розановой. Вот когда можно наконец сказать: «Каждая буква — поцелуйте свои пальчики». Странно, ни Бальмонт, ни Блок — а уже чего казалось бы современнейшие люди — не догадались вручить свое детище не наборщику, а художнику... Вещь, переписанная кем-либо другим или самим творцом, но не переживающим во время переписки себя, утрачивает все те чары, которыми снабдил ее почерк в час «грозной вьюги вдохновения».	THERE ARE TWO POINTS 1) That mood changes the handwriting during writing. 2) That handwriting, originally changed by the mood, transmits this feeling to the reader, regardless of the words. The same issue should be raised about written, visible or simply touchable, as by a hand of a blind person, signs. Clearly, the speaker need not necessarily be the scribe of a self-runed book, even better if he entrusted an artist with it. But these books do not exist yet. For the first time they were created by Futurists, namely: «An old love» was rewritten for publication by M. Larionov. «Vzorval» by N. Kulbin and others, «Duck nest» by O. Rozanova. That's when we can finally say: «Each letter – kiss your fingers». Strangely, it occurred to neither Balmont nor Block – and they seem to be the modernest men – to give their creatures to an artist, not to a typesetter... The object, rewritten by someone else or by a creator himself, but not experiencing themselves during rewriting, loses all those charms that were given to it by the handwriting during «the terrible blizzard of inspiration».
В. Хлебников, А. Крученых 1913	V. Khlebnikov, A. Kruchyonykh 1913

notes on some of the words:
"armiaks" - traditional peasants' coats made of heavy cloth
"svyatopolks" –is a name of the brother and supposed killer of Boris and Gleb, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boris_and_Gleb, for example, is impossible to translate into English.
Some other unusual words are: речарь (possibly Old Slavonic, here: speaker), саморунной (self-runed).

Block (Blok) and Balmont are Russian poets of the early 20th century who wrote in a more traditional manner than Kruchyonykh-Khlebnikov, see:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Blok, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konstantin_Balmont

Velimir Khlebnikov (1885-1922), also Hlebnikov & Chlebnikov, was a dervish of the poetry. He lived without home, without a social occupation, by his poetry and philosophical ideas only, calling himself a Chairman of the globe. His own belongings were only pillowcases filled by rough copies of his poems, though he sometimes lost them too. Khlebnikov was possessed by poetry, by language itself, by a magic of poetic creation. He combined zaum with archaic, sounds with numbers, poetry with numerology. He traveled in Russia, Ukraine and Persia, and died in 1922 in misery in a distant village of the Novgorod region. His poetry influenced many Russian poets and is still discovered and discussed among writers and researchers.

Aleksandr (or Aleksei) Kruchyonykh (1886-1968), also Kruchenykh & Kruchonykh, was one of those Russian extremist poets of the early 20th century who changed the way of writing and book publishing. He made his books himself by handwriting, to bring individuality in literary creativity. Altogether he made more than 200 handwritten books, though not all of them are found now. At the same time Kruchyonykh proclaimed a victory of technique over nature and an inevitable change of imperfect sun by electric light. Kruchyonykh was a theoretician and practitioner of experimental poetry, and his lines “diir bul schil – ubeshschur – skum – vii so bu – r l az” became the most known *zaum* poem. Kruchyonykh argues that there is more Russian national poetry in these lines than in all Pushkin’s poetry. After 1930s, when most of his friends and colleagues died or were executed, he stopped to write. In 1950-60s, he met and talked to some of the young poets, thus passing the tradition of Russian experimental poetry to the next generation.

translation & biographies by Tatiana Bonch-Osmolovskaya, 2010

Scanned versions of a number of Russian avant-garde books, including **Взорваль/Vzorval/Explodity**, mentioned above, can be freely downloaded from
http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/digitized_collections/russian_avant-garde/pdfs.html
& some more sample pages are included in:
http://www.red-forest.com/smesh/books/gameslr.pdf

translation:

A Farewell to Monk Gao Xian (excerpt)

In the old days Zhang Xu was a master of the rustic style of writing, who learned no other art. Whenever his heart was moved, whether he was happy, angry or distressed, worried, pleased or at ease, enraged or wistful, drunk, bored or resentful, he would express it in his calligraphy. Whatever he saw, mountains and streams, cliffs and valleys, birds and beasts, insects and fish, flowers, fruit, trees or plants, the sun, the moon and the stars, the wind and the rain, flood and fire, thunder and lightning, song and dance, raging battles, all the changing phenomena of earth and heaven, whether inspiring or fearful, he would embody it in his writing. Thus his calligraphy was well-nigh divine, passing men's comprehension. By devoting his life to it he made his name.

written by Hán Yù 韓愈 (768 - 824 C.E., Tang Dynasty), one of the most respected and influential writers of classical prose in China.
translated by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, 1983
published in **Poetry and Prose of the Tang and Song** (Panda Books, Beijing, 1984)

"Crazy" Zhāng Xù 張旭 (late 600s - early 700s C.E., Tang Dynasty) has a reputation for being the wildest Chinese calligrapher in history. His "wild cursive" or "crazy running style" or "crazy grass style" calligraphy (kuang cao shu) was renowned for its expressiveness, but was often illegible. Sometimes, Zhang wrote while drunk, and later couldn't read his own writing. On one occasion, he used his long hair as a brush, and wrote on a wall inside his house. He often became excited, screaming or shouting, before he picked up his brush. A famous female dancer named Gongsun Daniang influenced his style. Despite his exuberant nature, Zhang was an efficient bureaucrat for much of his adult life. Zhang Xu was his brush-name, not his official name.

3 essays by Jim Leftwich:

a few thoughts emerging from the unarticulated text
for tom hibbard

visual writing deconstructs the conventional dichotomy of looking and reading. in attending to visual writing we are compelled to read non-textual components of the composition as semiotic agencies within the field of the writing.

visual writing is gaining more practitioners, which means it is expanding in complexity in proportion to the infusion of diverse subjectivities involved in its production.

collage is a component of visual writing, or at times a tool utilized in its production.

all visual writing is a rejection of, by which i mean an expansion of, regular writing.

a single written word has at least three distinct qualities, those of visuality, sound, and sense. in regular writing, as for example an article in a newspaper, these qualities are prioritized as follows: 1) sense, 2) sound, 3) visuality. visual writing rearranges these priorities. in many cases the new priorities are 1) visuality, 2) sense, 3) sound. but, much visual writing is also a form of sound poetry, and the priorities of regular writing are reversed, i.e.: 1) visuality, 2) sound, 3) sense.

meaning is not so much presented as is a series, or an aggregate, of opportunities for the collaborative construction of meanings by the interaction of the reader and the text.

visual writing is about reading, which is to say it's about thinking. it's about changing the way one perceives and thinks about one's perceptions, which is to say it's about changing the way one reads.

visual writing is not new, but it's still new enough to be marginal, which is to say we are not yet fully comfortable as a culture with reading aggregates, or with reading squiggly diagonals, or with reading invisible resonances scattered within a field.

meanings produced by pulsing swarms, or by improvised punctuations along irregular reading routes, are often new enough, or marginal enough, or strange enough to seem to some as though they don't belong in the conventional category of meaning. and perhaps they don't. new ways of reading, in the company of new ways of writing, will produce new categories of meaning.

as more visual writing is produced, and more of it is read, the strategies for reading it will gradually catch up with the strategies involved in writing it, and an exponential expansion of the meanings produced will inevitably occur.

we aren't there yet, but we're working on it.

02.14.05

from EVERY WORD IS AN ADVERB

Poetry is parsed through sound to construct as a provisional reading pulsing aggregates of unstable semantic units. Attention contracts and expands. The word itself is an unstable aggregate. Contraction sifts through syllables to letters; expansion gathers towards phrases and sentences. Content is glimpsed as a drift through ambient noise. Both the quality and the quantity of this noise vary according to each reader's capacity for entering it as an archaeologist of the asemic. Content is constructed experientially through endurance of and perseverance in the flux of a polysemic during. Polysemy is an occupational hazard for workers within the poem, no matter whether they enter as writers or readers. In reading, as in writing, the excessive production of meaning is encountered as a fundamental law. The amorphous chaos of infinite misreadings is contained only by an application of consensus constraints. The asemic appears as an aporia of excessive production during the collaborative process of meaning-building. Language itself exists as an alchemical athanor generating transformative meanings as an antithesis of sense.

A Brief Bible of Defiant Reading

the human eye is quicker than a chinese hopping spider. thus in reading the eye traverses the terraced chasms of the tao.

“give a man a fish and he will work all day. teach him to fish and he will eat you for lunch.” —chairman lao tzu

type moves at the speed of ink through sinews and fibers or at the speed of arithmetic among binary ephemera thus slowing the organic antics of the eye, which eases us ever closer to the momentous inertia of human culture.

reading is a process of dissembling the collapsible ideology of one’s local ecology. meaning is constructed through the labored disassembling of an osmotic aggregate.

the nimble fragility of the eye encourages in reading a conflation of subtlety with subjectivity and is perceived as a threat to the lucrative comfort zones of the holy socius.

when reading mercurial recounts of corporate tenacity and political autochthony the eye everts in a slow implosion and oozes against the synapses like ink from a frozen octopus.

images should be read as molten and bloated letterstrings from the secret text hidden in plain view. an image is a scrap of text offering itself on the inedible scale of maximum human aggrandizement. this is why humans tend to sleep through their dreams.

as a lunar moth is to an epson stylus 880 color printer, so also is the human eye to a keyboard before a screen. if the printer is beneath a lamp, as it should be, then the eye is like a butterfly, also as it should be, and the passage from screen to sheet is but a moment’s blink.

“a fish in the eye is worth two in the boot.” —sir jesus of christmas

“the letters are alien sperm.” —acidophilus kuttner (antwerp, 1460)

the aphorism drawn taut connects the horizon to its etymon : an it harm no man, read what thou wilt.

08.01.04

Jim Leftwich: http://jimleftwichtextimagepoem.blogspot.com/

recently published translations of the term "asemic writing":
écriture asémique in **Toth** 1 (Orléans, France, 2008; http://revuetoth.canalblog.com/), translator: Damien Dion
асемическое письмо in **СЛОВА** 6 (Smolensk, Russia, 2009; http://www.slova.uuuq.com/), translator: Глеб Коломиец /Gleb Kolomiets
aszemikus írás (Hungarian) in **Kalligram**, 2010 Március (Bratislava, Slovakia; http://www.kalligram.com/), translator: Koppány Márton/Márton Koppány

all 3 of these were used in translations of my short essay «the continuum between text & image», which can be found in **asemic movement** #1.

suggestion for research:

egg of a Common Guillemot or Common Murre
from Sam Noble Museum of Natural History

Similar pictures & a discussion are posted at
http://www.mcsweeneys.net/books/everythingthatrises.contest60.html

Ancient people, before they knew about writing, certainly saw patterns like the markings of this egg, in Nature.

I would suggest that more research be done, into the possibility that patterns on plants, animals, in the landscape, in the sky, or on water, were significant influences on humans developing Writing.